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ABSTRACT

To increase quality of Indiana State Board of Vocational and Technical Education (SBVTE) proposals and final reports, a study assessed the quality of sixty SBVTE proposals and final reports from fiscal year 1976-77 and provided SBVTE with quantified descriptions of them. The first review involved acquiring descriptive information about how the entire group handled a document section by applying two general questions: what necessary information is typically included? and what pertinent information is missing? A rating system, Indicators of Project Quality, developed cooperatively with the project monitor, served as the second review process. These major findings were identified: (1) objectives as presented in the proposal are the best predictor of overall project quality; (2) projects with high quality proposals tend to have high quality final reports, and projects with low quality proposals tend to have low quality final reports; (3) writers of proposals and final reports tend to follow SBVTE guidelines, whether appropriate or not; (4) content of documents consistently received lower ratings than format; (5) quality of funded projects differs according to nature of funded organization; and (6) project quality tends to increase as the funding level increases. (Appendixes include the review instruments and materials, which expand on the findings.) (YLB)

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ED186604

FINAL REPORT

INDIANA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AND SERVICE CENTER

Project No. 91-77-III-1

New Educational Directions, Inc.

Crawfordsville, Indiana

September, 1979

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CE 022 988

n/a--this project was a synthesis of other projects

Project population

Groups	Numbers of persons: Impacted by project	Conducting or giving input
students		
secondary	_____	_____
postsecondary	_____	_____
adult	_____	_____
school personnel		
secondary	_____	_____
postsecondary	_____	_____
adult	_____	_____
other		
teacher educators	_____	_____
employers	_____	_____
employees	_____	_____
other:_____	_____	_____
special needs		
disadvantaged	_____	_____
handicapped	_____	_____
migrant	_____	_____
minority	_____	_____
limited English proficiency	_____	_____
other:_____	_____	_____

Comments on Quality of SBVTE Proposals and Final Reports

New Educational Directions, Inc.
P.O. Box 307
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August 1979

Funded by the Indiana State Board of
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Project Number 91-77-III-1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Procedures and findings are presented in detail in subsequent sections of this report. Suffice it here to note that sixty SBVTE-funded projects' proposals and final reports were systematically reviewed twice. Based on these reviews, the following major findings were identified.

1. The objectives as presented in the proposal are the best predictor of overall project quality. The group of projects which had clearly written objectives scored significantly higher on the overall project score than the group of projects which did not have clearly written objectives. As SBVTE reviews proposals in making funding decisions, it may be desirable to weight the objectives section heavily.

2. Projects with high quality proposals tend to have high quality final reports and, conversely, projects with low quality proposals tend to have low quality final reports.

3. As a group, those writing proposals and final reports tended to follow SBVTE guidelines whether or not those guidelines were appropriate for their project. Therefore, SBVTE guidelines should be as explicit as possible but should also be able to accommodate different types of projects.

4. Both the content and format of proposals and final reports were rated. The content of these documents consistently received lower ratings than the format. More explicit guidelines may help in this area, and some inservicing of proposal writers, particularly in formulating and stating objectives, may be indicated.

5. The quality of funded projects differs according to the nature of the funded organization. Not surprisingly, universities with their research orientation rank the highest.

6. Project quality tends to increase as the funding level increases. This finding supports the SBVTE's move toward funding fewer, but larger projects.

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APPENDICES

The body of this report is designed to include summary data only. Supplemental information for this report is outlined below.

APPENDIX A - Information related to First Review of Projects - page 18

Includes:

-Criteria for Form A, a series of YES/NO questions-one form with information recorded from all projects.

-Copy of Form B, a narrative recording form for each project.

APPENDIX B - Information related to Second Review of Projects - page 20

Includes:

-Copy of "Indicators of Project Quality" rating system.

-Criteria used for rating "Indicators of Project Quality" items.

APPENDIX C - Information related to Weaknesses and Strengths of Separate Document Sections - page 26

Includes:

-Numerical descriptions of separate proposal and final report sections.

Personnel
Rationale
Overall Purpose and Objectives
Procedures
Budget
Statewide Impact/Products
Appendix
Project Evaluation
Dissemination

APPENDIX D - Information related to Importance of Guidelines - page 35

Includes:

-Numerical tallies and comments of "Indicators of Project Quality" items dealing with guidelines.

I. PURPOSE, SCOPE OF THE STUDY

As a component of a SBVTE funded project, a study was conducted by New Educational Directions, Inc. (NED) to assess the quality of 60 SBVTE proposals and final reports from FY 1976-77. The main intent of the study was to provide SBVTE with quantified descriptions of these funded projects. This study was based on the assumption that efforts to increase the quality of SBVTE proposals and final reports required a description of the projects as they currently exist. The purposes of this study did not include evaluating the merits of the objectives, that is, determining in any way if they were worthwhile. Also, at no time were the questions, "Should this project have been funded?" or "Did SBVTE get their money's worth on this one?" ever asked. Likewise, the products which were produced by a project were examined only in relation to their role in the project. For instance, if one of the project's objectives was to produce a slide show, evidence of that product being produced was examined. The specific content of the product was not examined.

The projects reviewed encompassed a wide range of topics, budget amounts, and skill levels. There were examples of proposals and final reports written in a haphazard primer style with obvious grammatical errors, as well as several exemplary documents. With a budget range of $290 to $41,000, the projects covered many diverse topics. However, as a reflection of the state plan for FY 1976, the most popular topic was job placement and follow-up activities with varying degrees of success and usefulness reported. Designing a review system which could identify commonalities existing in a group of projects this diverse was the main task addressed by this study.

II. STUDY DESIGN, RATIONALE

For the purposes of this report, "proposal", or "final report", refers to each of those documents separately, while "project" is intended to mean a proposal and final report considered as a unit. "SBVTE guidelines" refers to the written proposal *and* final report guidelines developed by SBVTE and used by proposal writers during FY 1976. Also, "format" refers to the general organization and form of the document, and "content" refers to what information is presented in the document. This distinction was made to assure that the review process examined more than the skill of the document writer.

This study only reviewed information that was contained in the proposals and final reports. Therefore, the extent to which the documents accurately described the project could not be determined. The study design involved two reviews of the proposals and final reports.

First Review of Projects

The first review involved acquiring descriptive information concerning how the entire group handled a document section. This process involved applying two general questions to each document section.

-What information is typically included here that is necessary?
-Is there pertinent information missing?

Appendix A is information related to the first review process.

Second Review of Projects

A rating system entitled, "Indicators of Project Quality" was developed cooperatively with the project monitor and NED staff and served as the second review process. This rating system consisted of 33 items divided into the following four categories:

Proposal Format	5 items
Proposal Content	12 items
Final Report Format	5 items
Final Report Content	11 items

Combining these item groupings in various combinations allowed the following five composite scores to be obtained:

Overall Project Format	(Includes Proposal Format and Final Report Format)	10 items
Overall Project Content	(Includes Proposal Content and Final Report Content)	23 items
Overall Proposal	(Includes Proposal Format and Proposal Content)	17 items
Overall Final Report	(Includes Final Report Format and Final Report Content)	16 items
Overall Project	(Includes Proposal Format, Proposal Content, Final Report Format and Final Report Content)	33 items

These items were designed with the purpose of providing standards that would allow every project the opportunity to score well regardless of the funding level or intent of the project. A copy of "Indicators of Project Quality" and the criteria used in rating the items appears in Appendix B.

There were a possible 33 items that could be rated for each project and five of those items could be rated as Not Applicable, therefore scores are reported as percentages. Every project was rated on at least 28 items. The weight of each item in determining the overall project score based on the total number of items included in the rating is presented in the following table.

Exhibit A

ITEM WEIGHT BASED ON NUMBER OF ITEMS RATED

Number of items rated	Percent weight of each item	Total percent possible
33	3.03	99.99
32	3.12	99.84
31	3.22	99.82
30	3.33	99.90
29	3.44	99.76
28	3.57	99.96

Mathematically, of course, the fewer items rated for a project, the more weight each item has in the overall score. For ease in interpretation, the range of weight per item is rounded and interpreted so that one item accounts for at most 4% in the overall project score.

The following table shows the mean project score and the percent score range for all projects which have been divided into groups by the number of items rated as N.A.

Exhibit B

MEAN PROJECT SCORES BY NUMBER OF ITEMS RATED NOT APPLICABLE

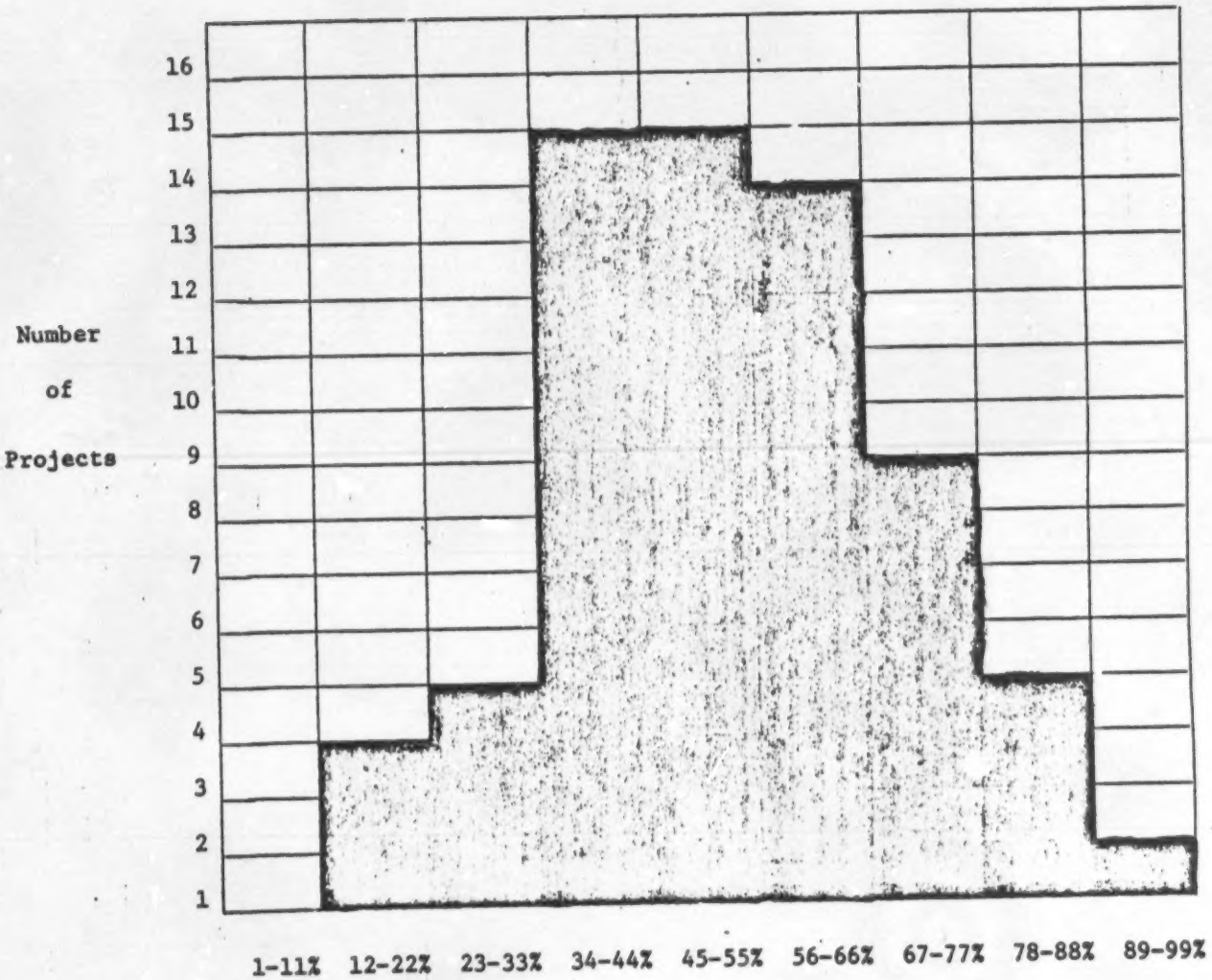
Number of items rated N.A.	5 N.A.	4 N.A.	3 N.A.	2 N.A.	1 N.A.	0 N.A.
N of group	10	6	11	10	13	10
X of group	49.5%	53.6%	50.7%	47.6%	51.6%	62%
Range of group (%)	22-71	38-60	20-93	26-84	22-81	45-82

The range of each group demonstrates that regardless of the number of items rated, there were projects of differing quality in each group.

As graphically portrayed in Exhibit C the overall project scores for "Indicators of Project Quality" resulted in a shape similar to a normal curve. This indicates that the rating system did distinguish differences in project quality.

Exhibit C

DISTRIBUTION OF PROJECT QUALITY



III. FINDINGS

Distribution of Project Quality

The range of the overall project scores based on the "Indicators of Project Quality" rating system is 20%-93%. All 7(12%) of the projects with overall project scores of 33% or below were projects involving placement centers. The 13 (22%) projects with overall ratings of 67% or higher were largely curriculum development projects. Two placement center projects were also included in this group. Of the 10 projects which received an overall rating of 70% or higher, seven were university projects and three were area school projects.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Proposals and Final Reports

As SBVTE guidelines revisions were taking place during the course of this project, it was not sufficient to examine separate document sections only in relation to how well they followed SBVTE standards. Weaknesses in the content of separate document sections could be a result of attempting to use guidelines which did not fit the project. During project reviews emphasis was placed only on identifying information which was useful to report about a project. Because there were several instances where information could be appropriately located in several document sections, the specific document section that information was located in was of lesser importance.

Following is a listing of the "Indicators of Project Quality" items reported with the number of projects receiving credit for each item. The items are grouped as they were on the "Indicators of Project Quality" form with proposal and final report items each divided into content and format categories.

Exhibit D

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Item	N	Percent receiving credit	Percent NOT receiving credit
Proposal follows SBVTE guidelines.	60	73%	27%
Cover and cover backing sheet are completed accurately.	60	92%	8%
Table of contents is included (if proposal exceeds 5 pages)	19	16%	84%
The document is free of spelling, grammatical errors.	60	78%	22%
Word choice, sentence and paragraph structure are correct and appropriate.	60	33%	67%

Exhibit E

PROPOSAL CONTENT

Item	N	Percent receiving credit	Percent NOT receiving credit
Subsections contain appropriate information.	60	60%	40%
Staff persons project qualifications are given.	60	82%	18%
Personnel section includes percentage of time commitment to project.	60	40%	60%
Personnel section includes specific tasks.	60	27%	73%
Need for project is given.	60	63%	37%
Objectives are clearly written, and specific.	60	57%	43%
Objectives can be met by the stated procedures.	60	37%	63%
Procedures are provided with sufficient detail.	60	12%	88%
Timeline of procedures is included.	60	72%	28%
Budget is reasonable in relation to procedures.	60	72%	28%
Intended expenditures are explained.	60	40%	60%
Statewide impact is indicated.	60	53%	47%

Exhibit F

FINAL REPORT FORMAT

Item	N	Percent receiving credit	Percent NOT receiving credit
Final report follows SBVTE guidelines.	60	68%	32%
Cover and information sheet are completed accurately.	60	98%	2%
Table of contents is included (if final report exceeds five pages).	30	53%	47%
The document is free of spelling, grammatical errors.	60	83%	17%
Word choice, sentence and paragraph structure are correct and appropriate.	60	33%	67%

Exhibit G

FINAL REPORT CONTENT

Item	N	Percent receiving credit	Percent NOT receiving credit
Subsections contain appropriate information.	60	47%	53%
Sections of final report are not taken verbatim from proposal.	60	13%	87%
Objectives are the same as in proposal.	60	67%	33%
Objectives were accomplished (½ given if major portion of objectives completed).	60	½-40%, 1-25% — 65%	35%
Procedures were followed.	60	30%	70%
If referenced, appendix is included.	33	85%	15%
If appendix is included, it is referenced in report body.	41	80%	20%
Appendix is appropriate.	41	56%	44%
Project was appropriately evaluated.	60	15%	85%
Intended budget was followed.	60	40%	60%
Project products are written so that they can be used by other vocational programs.	60	20%	80%

As evidenced in the previous exhibits the five content items which most frequently received credit are listed below. The items are listed along with the number of projects receiving credit on the item (N=60).

49 Staff persons project qualifications are given.

43 Timeline of procedures is included.

43 Budget is reasonable in relation to procedures.

40 Objectives are the same as in proposal.

38 Need for project is given.

All of these items relate to sections of the SBVTE guidelines which had very specific instructions. For instance, the guidelines stated instructions which are nearly a verbatim wording of the staff qualifications item. These instructions need little interpretation, and as the tally shows, proposal writers did tend to include background information on their project personnel. Proposal writers as a group evidently are able to follow through with concrete standards such as this. On the other hand, the five items listed below which were the items least frequently receiving credit involved more abstract conceptualization. Again, these are items rating the content of both proposals and final reports.

7 Procedures are provided with sufficient detail.

9 Project was appropriately evaluated.

12 Project products are written so that they can be used by other vocational programs.

15 Objectives were accomplished.

16 Personnel section includes specific tasks.

The SBVTE guidelines for sections related to these items indicate a process is to be described but do not clearly define what information to include about the process.

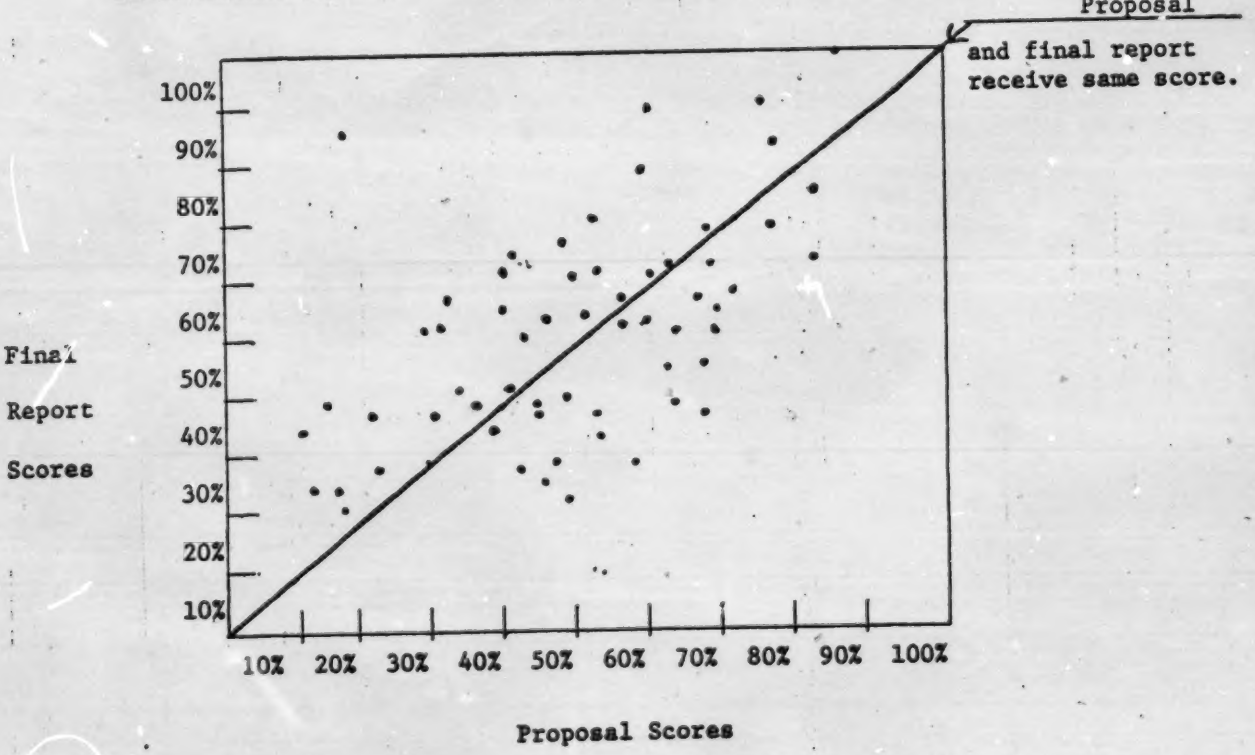
Relationship Between Proposal Quality and Final Report Quality

A correlation ($r=.56$ $p < .001$) between the proposal scores and the final report scores indicates that projects with high proposal scores tend to have high final report scores and projects with low proposal scores tend to have final reports with low scores. That is, the quality of a proposal is a reasonably good predictor of the quality of the final report and, to the extent that final reports reflect the quality of projects, proposals also predict the latter. The significance level of this correlation allows one to say with confidence that the correlation between proposal quality and final report quality is not a random happening. Practically speaking, there is a good chance that a high quality final report will be produced by a project which submitted a high quality proposal.

The following graph shows the relationship between proposal quality and final report quality.

Exhibit H

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROPOSAL QUALITY AND FINAL REPORT QUALITY



Importance of Objectives to Project Quality

Further examination was done to identify the individual sections of proposals which might be used as predictors of a quality project. For each item, the projects were grouped according to their rating (0-1) on each item. The items that showed the greatest differences between means for the two groups were seen as the best individual discriminators of quality projects. The following exhibit presents the findings of that process.

Exhibit I

IDENTIFICATION OF PREDICTORS OF PROJECT QUALITY

R - Range of group

D - Difference between means of groups

Item	D	No credit			Credit		
		N	X	R	N	X	R
Procedures are provided with sufficient detail	23.84	53	49.73%	(20-84)	7	72.57%	(62-93)
Objectives are clearly written and specific	9.44	26	41.38%	(20-64)	34	60.82%	(38-93)
Objectives can be met by state procedure	17.54	37	45.67%	(20-73)	23	63.21%	(38-93)
Subsections contain appropriate information	16.86	26	42.84%	(20-71)	34	59.70%	(26-93)
Timeline of procedures is included	16.76	19	40.94%	(20-67)	41	57.70%	(27-93)
Staff project qualifications given	13.83	12	41.33%	(20-82)	48	55.16%	(22-93)
Budget is reasonable in relation to procedures	12.79	18	43.44%	(20-78)	42	56.23%	(27-93)
Need for project is given	11.78	23	45.13%	(21-81)	37	56.91%	(20-93)
Intended expenditures are explained	10.43	35	48.05%	(20-78)	25	58.48%	(38-93)
Personnel includes specific task	6.44	44	50.68%	(20-93)	16	57.12%	(27-84)
Personnel section includes percent of time commitment	5.51	36	50.19%	(20-93)	24	55.70%	(27-84)

The greatest differences between means occurred on items which deal with objectives. A two-tailed t-test was applied to test the significance of the difference between the means of the groups receiving and not receiving credit on the item, "Objectives are clearly written and specific". The projects which had clearly written objectives scored higher on the overall project score than the group of projects which did not have clearly written objectives (60.82 vs. 41.38), ($t=5.414$ $p < .001$). In a practical sense, if two proposals are being considered for funding, there is a better chance of getting a quality project from the proposal which has clearly stated objectives.

The following analysis emphasized further the importance of objectives to a project. The analysis in the previous section examined the projects in relation to rated items on the proposal. This section examines the projects in relation to items rated on the final report. These projects we e divided into three groups according to the rating (0-½-1) received on the item, "Objectives were accomplished."

Exhibit J

IMPORTANCE OF ACCOMPLISHING OBJECTIVES

Group	Standard	Means	N
Group 1	Received 1 on "Objectives were accomplished"	65.00%	15
Group ½	Received ½ On "Objectives were accomplished"	54.33%	24
Group 0	Received 0 on "Objectives were accomplished"	40.57%	21

Statistically significant results ($p < .001$) were obtained when two-tailed t-tests were applied to each pair (0-½, ½-1, 1-0) of the groups. This analysis further emphasizes the importance of objectives to overall project quality.

Characteristics of Quality Projects

Examination of the overall quality of projects can include specific focus on issues. It was determined pertinent to this project to examine the following two questions.

-Does the type of funded organization affect the quality of projects?

-Does funding level affect the quality of projects?

The following two exhibits present information with which to examine these questions.

Exhibit K

MEAN OVERALL PROJECT SCORES BY ORGANIZATION

Organizations	University Group 1	Area Schools Group 2	School Corporations Group 3	Others Group 4
N of group	12	14	20	14
Mean of group	66.75%	51.79%	50.8%	42.07%
Range of group	(55-93)	(29-71)	20-82)	(26-60)

There is a difference in the quality of projects carried out by various funded organizations. Though there is a numerical difference in means between any two of these groups, there is no practical difference in quality between the second and third groups. Because of the "Indicators of Quality" design, it is necessary to have a difference of at least several items to indicate any actual difference in project quality.

The following exhibit shows that project quality tends to increase as the funding level increases. The difference between means of the lower two funding levels, and the upper two funding levels is large enough to be interpreted as a difference in quality.

Exhibit L

MEAN OVERALL PROJECT SCORES BY FUNDING LEVEL AS REPORTED IN FINAL REPORT BUDGET

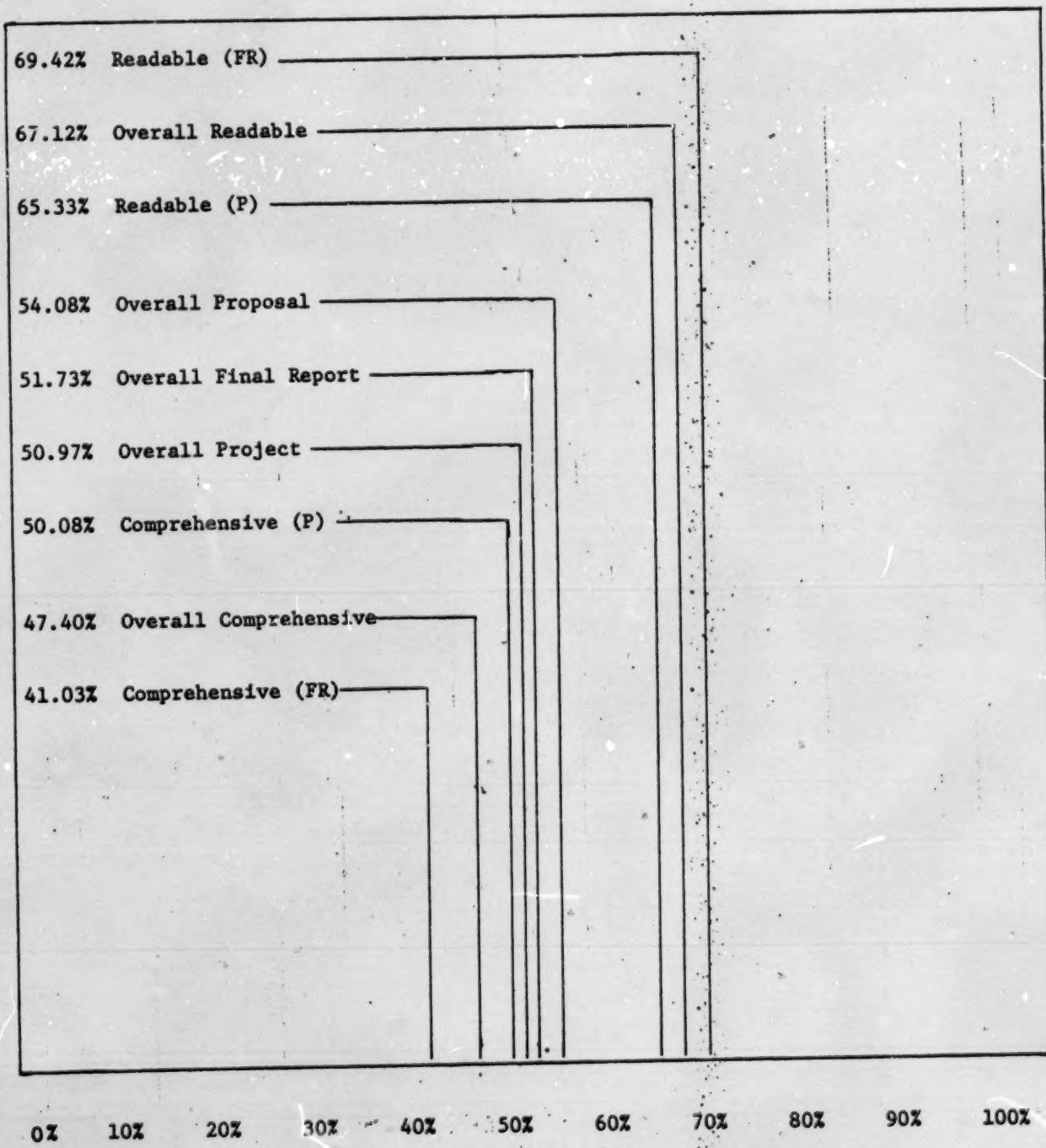
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Funding level	$290-500	$4,600-$7,150	$12,700-$18,000	$20,000-$41,000
N	9	17	8	9
Mean	48.33%	46.41%	59.38%	62.00%

Summary of "Indicators of Project Quality" Scores

The following exhibit indicates that the greatest weakness of documents is in content and not in format. The three scores dealing with format have the highest means and the three scores dealing with document content have the lowest means.

Exhibit M

MEAN SCORES FOR INDICATORS OF PROJECT QUALITY



Though the format of the documents as a whole has been shown to be better than the content, there are notable instances of the format of documents being so inadequate as to make it difficult to ascertain the content of the document. The group of projects in this category would not have received credit for the "Indicators of Quality" item, "Word choice, sentence and paragraph structure are correct and appropriate."

Below are some examples of quotes which appear to be questionable procedures, or meaningless terms:

1. "e.g., ability to administer modifications knowledgeably, but not to signing with the deaf patient".
2. "cross-patch"
3. "perceptual evaluation"
4. "mission analysis"
5. "significance was established at 1.0 on the scale. Statements were eliminated on the basis of this data evaluation"

Importance of Guidelines

It does not seem presumptuous to conclude that lack of expertise or inexperience rather than lack of motivation is responsible for most weaknesses found in projects. The strongest indication of this is that 44 proposals and 41 final reports followed SBVTE guidelines. This certainly can be seen as an indication of the attempt by project personnel to meet SBVTE standards. Even when the information contained in the proposal or final report subsection was inappropriate, project personnel appeared to be striving to accomplish what they evidently viewed as proper procedure. In many cases where information was inappropriately placed in a document section, the kind of misunderstanding the writer was experiencing was obvious. This motivation for quality, evidenced by project personnel in their striving to meet SBVTE guidelines, is an encouraging foundation on which to build further efforts directed toward increasing the quality of proposals and final reports.

The following examples indicate the importance of providing specific guidelines for project personnel.

In the SBVTE proposal guidelines as an explanation of the Analysis Technique section, *"Describe how the data collected will be studied,"* is given. Following are some of the interpretations of that statement. All of the examples were taken from the Analysis Technique section of proposals.

1. "Individual teacher conferences will be held."
2. "The slides will be edited and projected and taped script will be made with commentary on each slide."
3. "Content will be taught in my vocational machine trades class during January and February of 1976."
4. "Project participants will report their observations of persons-on-the-job to prepare an end products."
5. "Task will be reviewed with local Advisory Board members."

Clearly, the kinds of research listed on the proposal cover backing sheet are among the most misunderstood items presented in either the proposal or final report guidelines. The category indicated by project personnel seemed almost arbitrary. This lack of understanding is further documented by many projects which have one category marked on the proposal and another in the final report.

The following examples are given to emphasize the confusion which evidently exists as to what information is to be included under various subsections in the proposals and final reports. Each example is taken from a different proposal or final report to give some idea as to the extent and frequency of these errors. This is not meant to indicate there were not multiple errors in some documents. In some examples below, the information may be pertinent to the report, but placed in the wrong subsection. Other examples are clearly inappropriate. Parentheses indicate what subsection of the proposal or final report the example appeared in. All of these examples were from projects in the lower third of the distribution of projects.

1. Camera, flashbulbs (Instrumentation)
2. Posters about the job bank (Evaluation)
3. Hire clerical assistant (Evaluation)
4. Years truck driving--moonlighting (Personnel)
5. Evaluation is necessarily a follow-on activity (Evaluation)
6. Questions to ten students (Instrumentation)
7. Two seminars were held (Evaluation)

As indicated in the examples, the sections* which most frequently contained misplaced information were:

1. Analysis Technique
2. Instrumentation
3. Evaluation

Specific descriptions of review indicators which concerned the guidelines are included in Appendix D.

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*The Unique Aspects section of the proposals usually contained a statement such as, "This proposal is in response to RFP# ____." Though this was not considered appropriate information, the frequency of this specific response was interpreted as an indication of unclear SBVTE guidelines. There was only one proposal that outlined why their approach was innovative.

Report on Projects with Advisory Committees, Literature Reviews, and Instrumentation

In the first review of the sixty projects, NED focused on three commonly proposed activities. The first activity, advisory committees, was proposed in 30% of the projects. The second activity, literature reviews, was proposed in 12% of the projects. Instrumentation, the third activity was proposed in 46% of the projects. Exhibit N below indicates the percentage of projects which included necessary information regarding each of the three activities.

Exhibit N

ADVISORY COMMITTEES, LITERATURE REVIEWS, AND INSTRUMENTATION

	Yes		No	
Activity: Advisory Committee	Percent	N	Percent	N
1. Was the purpose of advisory committee given?	44%	8	56%	10
2. Was the make-up of advisory committee given?	44%	8	56%	10
3. Was the number of times the advisory committee met given?	17%	3	83%	15
4. Did the advisory committee accomplish their purposes?	28%	5	72%	13
Activity: Literature Review				
5. Was the purpose of the literature review given?	29%	2	71%	5
6. Were the sources of the literature review listed?	71%	5	29%	2
7. Did a finished copy of literature review appear?	0	0	100%	7
Activity: Instrumentation				
8. Was instrument described?	25%	7	75%	21
9. Was a copy of instrument included?	86%	24	14%	4
10. Was statistical analysis performed?	18%	5	82%	23

It appears that sufficient information related to each activity is frequently not addressed in proposals and final reports. In NED's judgment deleting this information is a definite weakness in the documents.

Musings on the Findings

"What information would be useful to report?" "What does 'upgrade' really mean?" These and other related questions were frequently considered during this study. One conclusion reached was there is no one road to quality. Indeed, quality means different things at different times. The diversity of the projects did not fall into tidy classifications. The funding level does seem critical in

forming standards by which to rate a project. Though much effort was expended to obtain objective standards, the funding level of a project was an ever present subjective influence. "Upgrading quality" seems to implicity assume more results per dollars spent, in spite of whatever other criteria are used. Many thousands of dollars were spent to develop polished, well-written curriculum materials, for instance. Were they used? How many people ever used the agribusiness employment project figures which were assembled? What about the $27,000 vocational diagnostic program which carried out an impressive piece of research? Was it used for anything? Is there any way to pull information from that research that counselors can use? Is that necessary? These are questions concerning the projects which did meet objective criteria for quality. What about the others? Hopefully, the information provided in this report can be useful in focusing on these issues.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The project rating system tallies show Procedures, Evaluation, and Objectives to be the three weakest sections of the documents. Because both outlining procedures and designing an evaluation of a project are nearly impossible without a defined project intent, it is recommended that future attempts at improving the quality of SBVTE funded projects be directed toward assisting project personnel in conceptualizing and communicating objectives. Methods to do this could include an instructional manual, workshops, and/or individual assistance provided by SBVTE staff.

2. NED staff endorse the SBVTE project guidelines revisions which have taken place during the course of this project. The Unique Aspect section, and the Analysis Technique section of the proposals reviewed in this study most frequently contained misplaced information and are examples of proposal sections which are not always pertinent to a project proposal. NED staff supports the SBVTE guideline revisions which emphasize flexibility in outlining different types of projects. Because of the tendency demonstrated by project personnel in the projects examined to include all SBVTE guidelines sections, it is recommended that SBVTE continue to emphasize the use of different guidelines for different types of projects.

3. The analyses done for this project demonstrate that various sections of a proposal can give indications of the quality of the proposed project. For this reason, NED staff support the numerical prioritizing of proposal sections indicated in the revised SBVTE proposal guidelines. Proposal writers do consider SBVTE guidelines in preparing project documents. Therefore, weighting sections can call attention to the importance of various proposal sections.

4. During this project, a system was devised to examine the quality of SBVTE projects as represented by the proposals and final reports. If this type of assessment is done in the future, it is recommended that a similar system be developed to gather data regarding the projects. A system could be developed that initially examined individual project sections, and allowed for aggregate use of the findings. It must be emphasized that this system must correspond closely to the state-of-the-art of SBVTE projects. This system also must assess information that is considered important by SBVTE personnel.

To develop this system, a sample of projects to be examined could be assessed using the system developed during this project. Revisions could then be made in the system depending on the findings. For example, in the future, if a sample of projects were examined using this system, ("Indicators of Project Quality") it

might be determined that the item "The document is free of spelling, grammatical errors," no longer was a definitive item as all projects received credit on the item. Likewise, it might be necessary to change the item "Proposal (or final report) follows SBVTE guidelines," to "Proposal (or final report) was written using appropriate SBVTE guidelines." Efforts at improving the quality of SBVTE projects could be geared toward these findings.

APPENDIX A

Information Related to First Review of Projects, page 1

Standards for FORM A

Advisory Committee
1. Was an advisory committee proposed?
2. Was the purpose of the advisory committee given?
3. Was the make-up of the advisory committee given?
4. Was the number of items the advisory committee met given?
5. Did the advisory committee accomplish its purpose?
Literature Review
6. Was a literature review proposed?
7. Was the purpose of the literature review given?
8. Were the sources of the literature review listed?
9. Did a finished copy of the literature review appear?
Instrumentation
10. Were instruments described?
11. Were copies of instruments included?
12. Was a statistical analysis performed?

FORM B

Title: _____

_____

GUIDELINES FOLLOWED

PROPOSAL	FINAL REPORT
Cover Sheet	Cover
Cover Backing Sheet	Information Sheet
Objectives	Statement of Objectives
Need	Statement of Problem
Procedures	Priority Area
Evaluation Technique	Strategies
Project Outcomes	Analysis
Personnel	Findings
Facility	Evaluation of Project
Equipment	Conclusions and Recommendations
Dissemination	Financial Statement
Budget	Appendices

PROJECT NUMBER	LOCAL	SBVTE	TOTAL	ACTUAL
_____	$	$	$	$

Type of Project:

_____ Submittor

_____ Evaluator

BUDGET:

PURPOSE:

OVERALL PURPOSE:

COMMENTS ON OBJECTIVES:

ADVISORY COMMITTEE PURPOSE:

MAKE-UP OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

RATIONALE FOR INSTRUMENT:

FOLLOW-UP:

TARGET POPULATION:

ADMINISTRATION:

DATA ANALYSIS:

RESULTS:

EVALUATION:

Technique proposed:

Technique carried out:

DISSEMINATION:

Technique proposed:

Technique carried out:

APPENDIX B

Information Related to Second Review of Projects, page 2

INDICATORS OF PROJECT QUALITY

Project # _____ Location _____

Title _____

_____

Each item is weighted as one point.
N.A. indicates Not Applicable and does not affect score.

PROPOSAL

Readable

___ Proposal follows SBVTE guidelines.
___ Cover and cover backing sheet are completed accurately.
___ Table of contents is included (if proposal exceeds 5 pages).
___ The document is free of spelling, grammatical errors.
___ Word choice, sentence and paragraph structure are correct and appropriate.
___ of ___ = _____% Total *readable score* for proposal

Comprehensive

___ Subsections contain appropriate information.
___ Staff persons project qualifications are given.
___ Personnel section includes percentage of time commitment to project.
___ Personnel section includes specific tasks.
___ Need for project is given.
___ Objectives are clearly written, and specific.
___ Objectives can be met by the stated procedure.
___ Procedures are provided with sufficient detail.
___ Timeline of procedures is included.
___ Budget is reasonable in relation to procedures.
___ Intended expenditures are explained.
___ Statewide impact is indicated.
___ of ___ = _____% Total *comprehensive score* for proposal

FINAL REPORT

Readable

___ Final report follows SBVTE guidelines.
___ Cover and information sheet are completed accurately.
___ Table of contents is included (if final report exceeds five pages).
___ The document is free of spelling, grammatical errors.
___ Word choice, sentence and paragraph structure are correct and appropriate.
___ of ___ = _____% Total *readable score* for final report

Comprehensive

___ Subsections contain appropriate information.
___ Sections of final report are not taken verbatim from proposal.
___ Objectives are the same as in proposal.
___ Objectives were accomplished (½ given if major portion of objectives completed).
___ Procedures were followed.
___ If referenced, appendix is included.
___ If appendix is included, it is referenced in report body.
___ Appendix is appropriate.
___ Project was appropriately evaluated.
___ Intended budget was followed.
___ Project products are written so that they can be used by other vocational programs.
___ of ___ = _____% Total *comprehensive score* for final report

___ of ___ = overall project format (readable) score _____%
___ of ___ = overall project content (comprehensive) score _____%
___ of ___ = overall project score_____%

Criteria
for
INDICATORS OF PROJECT QUALITY

The following standards were used to determine if credit was to be given for an indicator. Each indicator was weighted as one point, and was scored 1, 0, or N.A. which indicates Not Applicable. Because scores were reported as percentages of correct, indicators which were applicable, N.A. did not effect any scale or total scores.

PROPOSAL

READABLE

____ Proposal follows SBVTE guidelines.

A point on this item indicates all sections included in SBVTE guidelines were addressed in the document.

____ Cover and cover backing sheet are completed accurately.

In order to receive credit on this item, all information requested had to be included.

____ Table of contents is included (if proposal exceeds five pages).

This item was included as an indicator of overall organization. An indicator of quality format is accessibility of information. Five pages was considered a maximum length for easy access of proposal information without a table of contents.

____ The document is free of spelling, grammatical errors.

Credit was given on this item if there were no more than three spelling errors, which was considered allowable as typos, and no obvious grammatical errors. Most particularly, emphasis was placed on sentence construction. Evidence of sentence fragments, misplaced modifiers or generally unclear word order, were sufficient to rate this item 0.

____ Word choice, sentence and paragraph structure are correct and appropriate.

The intent of this item was to rate the overall writing style of the document. Credit on this item would indicate a writing style which conveyed succinctly the necessary information. Good transitions both between paragraphs and sections must be evident for overall internal cohesiveness, and the writer must convey accurately a clear representation of the intended project. Inclusion of excessive irrelevant information, or use of vague generalizations could be rated as 0.

COMPREHENSIVE

____ Subsections contain appropriate information.

To receive credit on this item, all sections of the proposal had to include information relevant to the section heading. Also, this item was rated 0 if the information in several sections was clearly insufficient.

____ Staff persons project qualifications are given.

Credit was given on this item if qualifications pertinent to the project were given for project staff.

____ Personnel section includes percentage of time commitment to project.

To receive credit here, the personnel section of the proposal had to include the percentage of time commitment to project of the named staff positions. Credit was also given here if the percentages were included in budget elaborations, rather than the personnel section.

____ Personnel section includes specific tasks.

This item was given credit if the proposal included a description of tasks each staff member would be involved in. Descriptions such as, "carry out the project," "monitor the project," or "be in charge of project" were not given credit unless accompanied by explanatory details.

____ Need for project is given.

To receive credit on this item, the project as defined had to logically follow from the stated rationale. It was deemed necessary to provide support information as to why this project was being proposed.

____ Objectives are clearly written, and specific.

Credit was given for this item if the objectives outlined a clear purpose.

____ Objectives can be met by the stated procedure.

All tasks necessary to accomplish the objectives had to be included to receive credit on this item.

____ Procedures are provided with sufficient detail.

To receive credit here, the procedure section had to include how the tasks necessary to accomplish the objectives would be completed. Most importantly the procedures section had to include recognition of some sequential ordering, and prioritizing of tasks.

____ Timeline of procedures is included.

A breakdown of project tasks with projected time involved for completion was necessary to receive credit here.

____ Budget is reasonable in relation to procedures.

Credit was given on this item if:

1. *All project tasks were budgeted for*
2. *Personnel time seemed sufficient to accomplish project tasks, and*
3. *All budgeted items related to the outlined project tasks*

____ Intended expenditures are explained.

To receive credit on this item, additional detail had to be provided to supplement the SBVTE budget form.

____ Statewide impact is indicated.

Stated indication of the generalizableness of this project to vocational schools in the rest of the state received credit on this item.

FINAL REPORT

READABLE

____ Final report follows SBVTE guidelines.

All sections outlined in SBVTE guidelines had to be addressed to receive credit on this item.

____ Cover and information sheet are completed accurately.

All information asked for had to be complete to receive credit on this item.

____ Table of contents is included (if final report exceeds five pages).

This item was included as an indicator overall organization. An indicator of quality format is accessibility of information. Five pages was considered a maximum length for easy access of proposal information without a table of contents.

____ The document is free of spelling, grammatical errors.

Credit was given on this item if there were no more than three spelling errors, which was considered allowable as typos, and no obvious grammatical errors. Most particularly, emphasis was placed on sentence construction. Evidence of sentence fragments, misplaced modifiers or generally unclear word order, were sufficient to rate this item 0.

____ Word choice, sentence and paragraph structure are correct and appropriate.

The intent of this item was to rate the overall writing style of the document. Credit on this item would indicate a writing style which conveyed succinctly the necessary information. Good transitions both between paragraphs and sections must be evident for overall internal cohesiveness, and the writer must convey accurately a clear representation of the intended project. Inclusion of excessive irrelevant information, or use of vague generalizations could be rated as 0.

COMPREHENSIVE

____ Subsections contain appropriate information.

To receive credit on this item, all sections of the proposal had to include information relevant to the section heading. Also, this item was rated 0 if the information in several sections was clearly insufficient.

____ Sections of final report are not taken verbatim from proposal.

A quality final report is seen by NED as a document produced after project completion, from the perspective of the completed project. To duplicate verbatim, entire sections of the proposal in the final report is an indicator of lack of quality, and receives 0 on this indicator. It is only appropriate (and in fact, of merit), to have the objectives in final report be identical to objectives in the proposal.

____ Objectives are the same as in proposal.

To receive credit on this item, the intent of the objectives in the proposal and the final report, must be the same. Authorized changes also receive credit, because if during project development, project staff find a reason to propose changes, and the rationale is acceptable to SBVTE, that is seen as appropriate.

____ Objectives were accomplished (½ given if major portion of objectives completed).

To receive credit on this item, all the objectives as stated in the proposal had to be completed, unless valid reason was given with SBVTE approval for changing the objectives. The ½ credit is given to differentiate projects which met some or most of their objectives, from those which met virtually none of their goals. Because this is the only item giving partial credit, a ½ in a total score indicates the partial achievement of objectives.

____ Procedures were followed.

An indicator of a quality project is seen as the statement of a comprehensive task management system, and the completion of that outline. If procedures were changed for an appropriate reason, and that reason was explained in the final report, credit was also given here. Mainly this item was intended to distinguish projects which followed through with their proposed plan, and those which significantly altered their proposed plan for no apparent reason.

____ If referenced, appendix is included.

Self-explanatory in nature, this item was intended to call attention to final reports which refer to information in an appendix, but do not include it.

____ If appendix is included, it is referenced in report body.

The intent of this indicator was to differentiate final reports which include information in an appendix for a specific reason as noted in a report body, from final reports which randomly include information in an appendix, with no mention as to the purpose of that information during the report.

____ Appendix is appropriate.

The purpose of an appendix is seen as the opportunity to make clearer certain sections of the report body, by providing supplemental information. An appendix which included information with no apparent usefulness to report body was seen as inappropriate and rated 0.

____ Project was appropriately evaluated.

To receive credit on this item, the evaluation done had to relate to determining the effectiveness of the project. It was not sufficient to report, "We consider this project a success," or "Our objectives were met," without giving criteria for making that judgment.

____ Intended budget was followed.

Having the overall total expenditures in the proposal and final report be the same was not sufficient to receive credit on this item. The individual categories for spending reported in the final report also had to match those proposed in the proposal. Changes made with authorization also received credit.

____ Project products are written so that they can be used by other vocational programs.

This item was to note projects which produced products in a form that would be useful to another vocational program. Format, writing style, and content were all taken into consideration. To receive credit, it was also necessary to provide sufficient detail. Usefulness could be defined in several ways. Replicable models, portable curriculum materials, or program ideas, and applicable research information could all be given credit for usefulness.

APPENDIX C

Information Related to Strengths and Weaknesses of Proposals and Final Reports, page 5

Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses by Document Section

During the development of the project reviews, random proposals and final reports were read by various NED staff members. From these readings, staff opinion of the proposals and final reports was very low. Reading about project after project that supposedly is setting up a placement center yet reports merely hiring a secretary while never defining any specific tasks, leaves the impression that the proposals and final reports are of very low quality. Yet, on looking at the results of rating the accomplishment of objectives which is certainly an important consideration of project quality, it was found that 39 (56%) out of the 60 projects accomplished at least the major portion of their stated objectives. In another instance, it seemed notable that report writers would reference an appendix and not include it. Yet, when the tallies were completed, of the 33 final reports which referenced an appendix 28 (85%) of them did include it. Because of this tendency to subjectively retain the unique and to avoid inappropriate generalizations resulting from those impressions, the inaccuracy of subjective observations is counteracted by providing numerical tallies.

The following information reported by document section was taken from both reviews (FORM A--FORM B, and "Indicators of Project Quality") of proposals and final reports. Though the initial review was intended to provide information on various separate sections of the documents and the intent of the second review was to provide a numerical summary of quality for the projects as a group, both reviews provided information regarding separate sections of the proposals and final reports. The grouping below includes information about both proposals and final reports. Therefore, the categories used refer to specific document sections as outlined in SBVTE guidelines, but are not always labeled the same as SBVTE guideline sections.

In some cases where a specific item or items from "Indicators of Project Quality" contains information related to strengths and weaknesses of a specific section, that item or items will appear with the section, along with criteria for rating the item, and the number and percentage of projects receiving credit on the item.

Personnel

(82%) 49 Staff persons project qualifications are given.

Credit was given on this item if qualifications pertinent to the project were given for the project staff.

(40%) 24 Personnel section includes percentage of time commitment to the project.

To receive credit here, the personnel section of the proposal had to include the percentage of time committed to the project by identified staff positions. Credit was also given here if the percentages were included in the budget notes, rather than in the personnel section.

(28%) 16 Personnel section includes specific tasks.

This item was given credit if the proposal included a description of tasks in which each staff member would be involved. Descriptions such as, "carry out the project," "monitor the project," or "be in charge of the project" were not given credit unless accompanied by explanatory details.

Project personnel are attempting to correctly complete this section of their proposals, as 49 of 60 projects did give appropriate qualifications for the intended project staff. However, there is room for improvement in this section since only 16 (72%) projects listed specific tasks that project staff would be involved in if their proposal was funded. This follows closely the general trend of a weakness, throughout the documents of insufficient detail or vagueness in various areas. Attempts were often made in the documents to provide information as to what tasks project personnel were to perform by including statements in the personnel section such as, "will be charge of project" or "will organize the project." A statement such as this without detail was not considered sufficient, especially if all project personnel did not have specific task indicated. The 16 projects noted above provided project tasks for all personnel in the project, and included all of the main project tasks outlined in their procedure section. Some projects (8) merely listed a figure as percentage of time commitment to the project, without providing information about the project tasks or the handling of release time from their present duties. This was viewed during the reviews as an attempt to follow the guidelines, and was not interpreted as evidence of an understanding on the writer's part as to the reason for including the percentage of time commitment of personnel to the project. A well-written, carefully detailed personnel section is an indication of an organized, well-planned project. The following table includes the percent of projects which received credit for all personnel items.

Items on Indicators of Project Quality which refer to the personnel section of proposals are:

"Staff persons project qualifications are given"

"Personnel section includes percentages of time commitment to project"

"Personnel section includes specific tasks"

Exhibit O

MEAN OVERALL PROJECT SCORES BY NUMBER OF PERSONNEL ITEMS RECEIVING CREDIT

Projects grouped by number of personnel section items receiving credit	N	Mean of overall project score
All three personnel section items received credit	7(12%)	63.7%
Two personnel section items received credit	24(40%)	52.1%
One personnel section item received credit	19(32%)	55.2%
No Personnel section items received credit	10(100%)	50.7%
Total N=	60(100%)	50.97%

Of the 19 (32%) projects which had only one aspect of the personnel section correctly included, 18 included the staff persons project qualifications. Of the 24 (40%) projects which received credit for two of the items involving the personnel section, 16 did not outline specific tasks, 7 did not include the percent of time commitment to project, and 1 did not include staff qualifications for project personnel.

Rationale

(63%) 38 Need for project is given.

To receive credit on this item, the project as defined had to logically follow from the stated rationale. It was deemed necessary to provide support information as to why this project was being proposed.

There were only three proposals which did not include a Need section. Including the same needs in the proposal as in the final report generally was judged to be a project strength. Forty-nine projects did exhibit this consistency. However, 23 of those 49 included verbatim in the final report what was presented in the proposal. There were several excellent examples of using follow-up study results in the Needs section of a proposal for evidence that a project was necessary. Because 38 (65%) of the 60 projects were able to outline a need for their proposed project, it appears that (as a group) proposal writers do understand the value of demonstrating need for their project.

Overall Purpose and Objectives

Resource materials on proposal writing cite a lack of focus and lack of clarity of purpose as common weaknesses of proposals nationwide (Eaves 1977). The importance of clarity of purpose rests on the realization that all other sections of the proposal involve a relationship with the proposal intent. It has been shown that SBVTE proposals which included well-defined objectives were able to outline specific procedures and project personnel could report identifiable results in their final reports. Conversely, when the objectives in SBVTE proposals were unclear, vague, too broad, or ambiguous, it often followed that other sections of the proposal also were weak.

(57%) 34 Objectives are clearly written, and specific. (Proposal)

Credit was given for this item if the objectives indicated a clear purpose.

(67%) 40 Objectives are the same as in proposal. (Final report)

To receive credit on this item, the intent of the objectives in the proposal and the final report, must be the same. Authorized changes also receive credit if during project development, project staff find a reason to propose changes, and the rationale is acceptable to the SBVTE.

(40%) 24 (25%) 15 Objectives were accomplished (½ given if major portion of objectives completed)

To receive credit on this item, all of the objectives as stated in the proposal had to be completed, unless SBVTE approval for changing the objectives was given. The ½ credit is given to differentiate projects which accomplished some or most of their objectives from those which accomplished none of their goals. Because this is the only item giving partial credit, a ½ in a total score indicates the partial achievement of objectives.

The objectives of a project are of central importance to the project. All other sections of the documents can be viewed as support information for the objectives. Because of this importance, it was decided to give ½ credit for achieving a portion of the objectives. With a total of 39 (65%) of the projects accomplishing at least some of their objectives, it can be seen that more often than not projects do carry out at least a portion of their goals. One of the main weaknesses in both proposals and final reports as a group, was a vague, rambling style. These items distinguish documents which were able to clearly define a purpose. Obviously, if a proposal contained objectives so unclear that their intent was unclear, credit could not be given on these items. Also, if the stated purpose of the project was unclear, whether the intent was accomplished could not be ascertained. Of the 21 (35%) projects which did not accomplish their objectives, a lack of clarity was the most frequently noted reason. In these 21 projects were examples of objectives so broad as to be unrealistic. For instance, one project's purpose was to, "eliminate sexism in northern Indiana," and while this is desirable, it was questionable whether this would be accomplished with one brochure. In addition, sexism was not define, nor was a method included for determining if it was eliminated by the project. Following are examples of objectives which were clearly stated.

1. "Create a job bank, a reference area with information on at least 200 employers in Region ____ by June 30, 1977."
2. "To develop a slide presentation for showing to student groups as well as professional organizations and service clubs highlighting the purposes and operation of the DE programs in Indiana" (goes on to list phases of program to be included in the slide show)

These objectives provide enough detail to identify in the proposal stage of the project what is intended to be accomplished. With a clear intent outlined in the proposal, it was a simple matter to look in the final report for evidence of what was accomplished during the project. Unfortunately, many proposals had objectives which could not be judged either clearly complete and specific, or clearly lacking in detail. Following is an example of the kind of objective sometimes found which did supply some detail, but not enough to receive credit for the item, *"Objectives are clearly written and specific."*

"The objective of this project are to make available for use by vocational teachers in Indiana a taped and slide presentation showing good and poor landscape design and installation practices." This objective does tell what will be produced by the project. However, the use of "good and poor landscape design" to describe the contents of the slide presentation leaves much doubt as to what will actually appear as the content of the slide show. It is unclear as to how vocational teachers would incorporate such a slide show into their curriculum. The final report for this project included a script of the slide show. It was very vague, and included many broad generalizations about landscaping. The information was so broad, in fact, that it appeared to be geared toward a general audience, rather than landscaping students. However, because this project did produce what was stated in the proposal, it did receive credit for accomplishing objectives.

Procedures

(37%) 22 Objectives can be met by the stated procedures.

All task necessary to accomplish the objectives had to be included in the proposal to receive credit on this item.

Credit could be received on this item by merely listing the necessary main tasks of the project, and yet only 37% of the projects received credit. This finding indicates a weakness in the proposals to specify project tasks.

(12%) 7 Procedures are provided with sufficient detail.

To receive credit here, the procedure section had to include how the tasks necessary to accomplish the objectives would be completed. Most importantly, the procedure section had to include recognition of some sequential ordering, and prioritizing of tasks.

The criteria for this item indicate important considerations in proposal writing. The range of the overall project scores for the seven projects receiving credit on this item was (62%-93%) as compared to a range of (21%-93%) for all the projects. This seems to indicate that if a good job is done on the procedures section, the overall quality of the proposal will be above average.

(30%) 18 Procedures were followed.

An indicator of a quality project is the statement of a comprehensive task management system and the following of those procedures. If procedures were changed for an appropriate reason and that reason was explained in the final report, credit was given here. This item was intended to distinguish between projects which followed through with their proposed plan from those who altered their proposed plan for no stated reason.

As an indication of the importance of this item, *all 18 projects which carried out their proposed procedures accomplished at least the major portion of their objectives.* Ten (10) of the projects receiving credit on this item accomplished all of their objectives.

The previous comments and items referred to the project procedures as a unit. The following comments pertain to specific aspects of the procedures.

A. Timeline

(72%) 43 Timeline of procedures is included.

A breakdown of project tasks with projected time involved for the completion of those tasks was necessary to receive credit here.

The timelines included in projects ranged from a simple listing of projected completion dates for the main project tasks to formal graphs incorporating a number of subtasks. Since 72% of the projects included some form of a timeline, it appears that proposal writers as a group are aware of the desirability of including proposed project tasks completion dates in a proposal.

B. Advisory Committee

Advisory Committee--There were several excellent samples of projects incorporating an advisory committee in their procedures. These projects included the purpose (11 of 23) (43%) and make-up (12 of 23) (52%) of their advisory committee in their proposal or final report, and one project even included advisory committee meeting minutes. However, there were 11 (43%) projects which mentioned an advisory committee, but gave no details about the committee. The

problem here may be the project personnel's lack of knowledge regarding what to include in a proposal or final report, rather than the obvious assumption that these project's advisory committees did not meet and served no purpose.

C. Instrumentation

There were 28 (47%) projects which reported using some form of instrumentation in their project.

FORM A Items	Yes	No
Was instrument described?	7(25%)	21(75%)
Was a copy of instrument included?	24(86%)	4(14%)
Was statistical analysis performed?	5(18%)	23(82%)

It sometimes seemed that instrumentation was used in these projects at one time or another for every conceivable wrong reason, or more often, for no obvious reason. There were several excellent examples of using follow-up study results in the Needs section of a proposal for evidence that a certain project was necessary, and several projects mentioned curriculum changes or equipment acquistion based on employer surveys. More often, however, surveys were taken with no apparent use made of the results, and unorganized information was included in final reports regarding return rate for a questionnaire or follow-up methods. It is a strength, though, that 24 projects that used some kind of instrument included a copy of it in their final report.

D. Literature Review

Form A items regarding a literature review were as follows:

Was a literature review proposed?

Was a purpose of the literature review given?

Were the sources of the literature review tested?

Did a finished copy of the literature review appear?

Literature Review--If a literature review is considered an important procedure for SBVTE projects, much more guidance needs to be given regarding what they involve. Nine of the projects stated they were going to do a literature review but included only a bibliography in the proposal or final report. In no case was a summary of the information obtained through a proposed literature review included in a proposal or final report. It is a strength, however, that five (71%) of the documents proposing to do a literature review did include the intended purpose for the literature review. It might be reasonable to assume that more was done on a project in this area than was reported, but again, the projects had to be reviewed based on what was reported.

Budget

(72%) 43 Budget is reasonable in relation to procedures. (Proposal)

Credit was given on this item if:

1. *All project tasks were budgeted;*
2. *Personnel time seemed sufficient to accomplish project tasks; and*
3. *All budgeted items related to the outlined project tasks.*

(40%) 24 Intended expenditures are explained. (Proposal)

To receive credit on this item, additional detail had to be provided to supplement the SBVTE budget form.

(40%) 24 Intended budget was followed. (Final Report)

Having the overall total expenditures reported as the same amount in the proposal and final report was not sufficient to receive credit on this item. The individual categories for spending reported in the final report also had to match those stated in the proposal. Changes made with authorization from SBVTE also received credit.

While rating a project budget on the preceeding items, consideration was given to the budget in relation to its role as a means to accomplish the proposed project. The review of the budget section was not intended to be a cost analysis of the project. The review did examine the degree to which the expenditures related to the project procedures and whether sufficient detail to understand these expenditures was provided. Review involved a cursory examination of expenditures unless an inconsistency seemed obvious. In the comparison of proposed budgets (in proposals) with actual budgets (in final reports), if amounts in specific categories were different by more than a few dollars, an explanation was sought. Frequently in these cases, in the proposal, funding was divided among several line items, then in the final report the total project budget would appear under one line item, typically personnel.

It seems important that 17 (28%) projects did not include a budget at all in their final report, and 19 made apparently unauthorized changes from their proposed budget. There were, however, other examples of conscientious project personnel acquiring permission to make budget revisions. There were also 24 proposals which provided a breakdown of budget categories with information regarding specific expenditures. Thirty-six proposals included only the SBVTE completed budget form.

Statewide Impact/Products

(53%) 32 Statewide impact is indicated.

Stated indication of the potential impact of this project on vocational programs in the state received credit on this item.

(20%) 12 Project products are written so that they can be used by other vocational programs.

This item was to note projects which produced products including final reports in a form that would be useful to another vocational program. Format, writing style and content were all taken into consideration. To receive credit, it was also necessary to provide sufficient detail. Usefulness could be defined in several ways. Replicable models, portable curriculum materials, or program ideas, and applicable research information could all be given credit for usefulness.

These two items were included to identify the frequency that project personnel gave some recognition of the concept that SBVTE Research and Development funds are intended for a broader purpose than local program use. Over half (53%) of the projects did indicate some awareness of this concept.

Final reports were considered project products in addition to other products specifically defined in projects. Only 20% of all projects were judged as being presented in a form that could be of value to other vocational programs. Most often, the reason for this deficiency was again a lack of detail. If an idea is to be used by others, it must be communicated. Among the accomplishments which could be disseminated were a student users manual for electro-laser-surveying systems, computer-aided instruction in drafting, instructional materials for LPN's, films to portray sex fair work attitudes, and a cost-effectiveness analytic model for postsecondary vocational programs.

Appendix

NA	NO	YES	
27	5	28	If referenced, appendix is included.

Self-explanatory in nature, this item was intended to call attention to final reports which refer to information in an appendix, but do not include it.

19	8	33	If appendix is included, it is referenced in report body.

The intent of this indicator was to differentiate final reports which include information in an appendix for a specific reason as noted in a report body from final reports which included information in an appendix with no mention of that information in the report.

19	18	23	Appendix is appropriate.

The purpose of an appendix is seen as the opportunity to make clearer certain sections of the report body by providing supplemental information. An appendix which included informavion with no apparent usefulness to the report body was seen as inappropriate and rated 0.

Since appendices were not necessary for all final reports, these items referring to an appendix could be rated Not Applicable. Over half (56%) of the appendices which were included were considered as appropriate. Typical reasons for not rating an appendix as appropriate were: 1) inclusion of trivial or unrelated material, 2) inclusion of unlabeled or unexplained information, and 3) inclusion of information which lacked organization to the extent that its purpose as a supplement to the document could not be discerned.

Project Evaluation

(15%) 9 Project was appropriately evaluated.

To receive credit on this item, an evaluation done had to relate to determining the effectiveness of the project. It was not sufficient to report, "We consider this project a success," or "Our objectives were met," without providing criteria for making that judgment.

As evidenced by the low percent of projects receiving credit for this item, evaluation seems to be a difficult phase of project management. As a group there seems to be little understanding of how to identify what a project accomplished or how to report what was done. This confusion is further evidenced by the existence of evaluation sections in nearly all documents. That is, project personnel did make attempts to supply an evaluation plan for their projects yet

only nine of these could be interpreted as being appropriate. Often the projects with evaluation plans which were the most vague in the proposal were the ones which provided even less detail in the final report. Along with lack of relationship to project, and insufficient detail, the other most frequent weakness in evaluation was an apparent confusion between supervision and evaluation. Frequently, inappropriate evaluation plans merely contained a statement such as, "the project will be supervised." Also, it was often the case that survey results were included as project evaluation, with no interpretation as to how the data reported was related to the project objectives or goals. Personal opinion on the overall project such as "This project was very successful," was also considered insufficient as an evaluation design. Clearly an evaluation design must be related to project objectives. If a project proposed to "improve vocational education," it would be difficult to develop an appropriate evaluation design.

This item was rated only on the appropriateness of the evaluation in terms of the project. There was no attempt made to rate sophistication or to require numerical documentation. For example, two of the nine appropriate evaluations were performed by very dissimilar projects. A $290 project to develop a self-improvement grooming course reported in their final report, "The students presented a demonstration upon completion of the course. The observable change was quite impressive. Comments by staff, administrators and participating students would verify the benefit." A 3-year (over $40,000) curriculum development project developed an extensive student questionnaire system for feedback on their materials and an assessment of their materials' effectiveness. Both of these evaluation plans were seen as appropriate because the evaluation related to the effectiveness of the project in accomplishing the project objectives.

Dissemination

With the current SBVTE policy of central dissemination only, commenting on the dissemination efforts of these projects would appear to serve no major purpose. Another reason for examining this information would be to gain insight into the influence of SBVTE guidelines on proposal writers. Nearly all of the proposals did show that the writers had an understanding of what dissemination was and how to go about it. Many viable approaches to dissemination were offered in proposals. Therefore, it was surprising that few final reports even mentioned any dissemination. Closer examination, however, reveals that dissemination was not included in the SBVTE final reports guidelines. As noted above, project personnel tend to follow SBVTE guidelines whether the guidelines are appropriate for the project or not. Having no dissemination section in the final report guidelines could account for no dissemination being reported. This suggests that SBVTE guidelines do play an important role in the kind of information project personnel include in their written documents.

APPENDIX D

Information Related to Importance of Guidelines, page 13

Guidelines

(73%) 44 Proposal follows SBVTE guidelines.

A point on this item indicates all sections included in SBVTE guidelines were addressed in the document.

(92%) 55 Cover and cover backing sheets are completed accurately.

In order to receive credit on this item, all information requested had to be included.

(98%) 59 Cover and information sheets are completed accurately.

All information asked for had to be complete to receive credit on this item.

These items were included to assess the extent to which documents were (logically) organized and pertinent material was included. Credit was not given on following guidelines if any section pertinent to the project was not included. The sections omitted most frequently were budget and personnel.

When cover sheets were included, typically the necessary sections were also completed. Five proposals and one final report did not include a cover sheet.

Content of Document Sections

(60%) 36 Subsections contain appropriate information. (Proposal)

To receive credit on this item, all sections of the proposal had to include information relevant to the section heading. Also, this item was rated 0 if the information in several sections was clearly insufficient.

(42%) 25 Subsections contain appropriate information. (Final report)

(Same as above in proposal section)

This item was intended as a screen for internal cohesiveness of a document. In determining weaknesses and strengths of proposals and final reports, identifying sections with clearly misplaced information could aid in determining specific document sections with which project personnel have difficulty. Having only 60% of the proposals and 42% of the final reports consistently include appropriate information in each document section would seem to indicate there is a problem with understanding what is intended by the guidelines. The Unique Aspects Section had more examples of unclear, miscellaneous information than any other. Only one proposal clearly outlined a fresh approach being proposed, and gave documented evidence as to why this approach was distinctive. Typically, this section included a need for the project in the local setting.

(13%) 8 Sections of final report are not taken verbatim from proposal.

A quality final report is seen by NED as a document produced from the perspective of the completed project. To duplicate verbatim, entire sections of the proposal in the final report is an indication of a lack of quality and received 0 on this item.

As indicated by the stated criteria for this item, all sections of the final report should appear from the perspective of the completed project. To include entire sections of the proposal in the final report without even changing verb tense is not considered appropriate report writing style. As shown by the percentage (87%) who do include in the final report complete sections verbatim from the proposal, this is considered a weakness of the documents as a group.

(33%) 20 Word choice, sentence and paragraph structure are correct and appropriate. (Proposal)

The intent of this item was to rate the overall writing style of the document. Credit on this item indicates a writing style which succinctly conveyed the necessary information. Good transitions both between paragraphs and sections must be evident for overall internal cohesiveness and the writer must convey a clear representation of the intended project. The inclusion of irrelevant information or the use of vague generalizations was rated as 0.

(33%) 20 Word choice, sentence and paragraph structure are correct and appropriate. (Final report)

(same as above criteria for proposal section)

Credit on this item was intended to indicate the presence of an appropriate technical writing style in a document. The 20 documents which received credit on this item roughly correspond to the number of projects which were in the upper third of all the projects. Though the same number of proposals and final reports received credit on this item, they were not always from the same project. Fifteen (75%) of the proposals which received credit on this item, were projects that submitted a final report which also received credit on this item.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR FINAL REPORT ENDING August 31, 1979
(Date)

Project No. 91-77-III-1

ITEMS	Project Budget FY 19--		Total Expenditures on Project		End of Project Balance	
	Agency	Federal	Agency	State/ Federal	Agency	State/ Federal
A. DIRECT EXPENDITURES						
1. Personnel		$13,860.00		$17,892.79		($4,032.79)
2. Contractual services		2,000.00		3,066.54		(1,066.54)
3. Employee benefits		2,150.00		2,150.00		-0-
4. Travel		240.00		232.11		7.89
5. Supplies and materials		300.00		139.41		160.59
6. Communications (include phone call, printing)		1,150.00		353.86		796.14
7. Properties (rentals or purchase of equipment)						
8. Facilities	$ 300.00	200.00	$ 300.00	200.00	-0-	-0-
9. Product production and dissemination	300.00		300.00		-0-	
10. Project Evaluation						
B. INDIRECT EXPENDITURES	$2,074.00		$2,074.00		-0-	
C. TOTAL EXPENDITURES	$2,674.00	$19,900.00		$24,034.71		*($4,134.71)

Fiscal Agent/Director: Judith M. Thompson

Institution/Agency Name: New Educational Directions, Inc.

*Refund this amount to the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education